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RESOURCES EXPLAIN ASSESSMENT/ACCOUNTABILITY MODEL

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) has developed resources to help explain the state's new assessment and accountability model for public schools.

KDE has dedicated a page on its website to the Unbridled Learning: College/Career Readiness for All model, which was developed in response to the mandates of 2009's Senate Bill 1. The page is accessible by clicking the Unbridled Learning icon on the KDE homepage (www.education.ky.gov).

Items posted on the page include two brochures – one on assessment, another on accountability – aimed at parents, but also intended for a general audience. Those brochures are posted near the bottom of the page, in two formats (a printable brochure layout and a text version).

Another posted item called *Unbridled Learning Summary* provides a graphic representation of the way the new accountability model will impact schools and districts.

Kentucky Education Commissioner Terry Holliday explains the new accountability model in a videotaped presentation, also now available. The presentation may be accessed at mms://video1.education.ky.gov/Accountability_4-12-2012.

The Unbridled Learning accountability model will be applied for the first time to test scores and other data from the current school year. This month, public school students begin taking the new Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP) tests in reading, mathematics, science, social studies and writing. Students also have participated in end-of-course assessments in specific subjects at the high school level. Scores from these tests, along with data on closing achievement gaps, student academic growth, graduation rates and college/career readiness, will be used to determine school and district accountability designations.

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Those designations will be announced in the fall. In February 2012, the U.S. Department of Education approved Kentucky's application to use the Unbridled Learning model to provide both state and federal accountability designations for public schools and districts. In Kentucky, these designations will replace the two-tiered accountability system that was in place since the passage of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2001.

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FAQ on the Unbridled Learning: College/Career-Ready for All Accountability Model

Q: Why is Kentucky implementing a new system of assessment and accountability for public schools?

A: Senate Bill 1, passed in the 2009 session of the General Assembly, called for a new model that includes multiple measures of school and district effectiveness. Senate Bill 1 also mandated a new testing system, increased collaboration between higher education and P-12, and new academic standards in core subjects.

Q: Can scores and other data from this new system be compared to those from the old Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS)?

A: No. The tests are different, and the standards that are assessed have changed. The two systems are not designed to show the same information. Even the percentages of students who are considered proficient can't be compared, because the scores that students will have to achieve to be proficient will not be the same.

Q: How will schools and districts be held accountable?

A: Based on student test results and other data, schools and districts will get points in five areas:

- Achievement – Just as in the past, elementary and middle school students' scores will be labeled as novice, apprentice, proficient or distinguished. Kentucky's goal is 100 percent proficiency for all students. At high school, achievement is based on end-of-course exams and an on-demand writing test.
- Gap – Schools will compare test results for African-American, Hispanic, Native American, special education, low income and limited English proficiency students, combined into one gap group, to results for other students who aren't in those categories.
- Growth – A statistical program will measure how much students' scores are improving from one year to the next.
- College/Career Readiness – Schools and districts will provide information about how many students are ready for college and/or careers, based on test scores and certifications earned.
- Graduation Rate – Schools and districts will report how many students graduate within four years of high school.

These points will be combined into one overall score, on a scale of 0 to 100. The overall score will determine whether schools and districts are performing at high or low levels and how they are labeled.

Q: What happened to the NCLB labels?

A: In the fall of 2011, the U.S. Department of Education announced the opportunity for states to apply for waivers from the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, also known as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. These waivers effectively enabled states to develop their own accountability models that would serve both state and federal purposes. In February 2012, Kentucky's request to use the Unbridled Learning model was approved.

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Here's a comparison of the former NCLB model and the Unbridled Learning model.

	NCLB	UNBRIDLED LEARNING
School/District Labels	Two separate labels for state and federal purposes	One label for both state and federal purposes
Accountability	Based on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP); different types and numbers of goals for schools/districts	All schools/districts must improve, each year; lowest-performers get intense assistance; high performers recognized
Consequences	Only schools/districts funded by federal Title I program	All schools/districts
Testing for Accountability	Reading, mathematics, science	Reading, mathematics, science, social studies, writing
Other Measures	Graduation rates	Graduation rates, achievement gaps, college/career readiness, student academic growth Program Reviews for arts & humanities and practical living/career studies
Federal Funding	Limited flexibility	More flexibility to move funds where they are needed
School Transfers	Offered when practicable	Not offered; schools/districts required to make concrete efforts toward improvement

Q: What kinds of tests do students take now?

A: The K-PREP tests are given to students in grades 3 through 12 and include reading, math, science, social studies, writing and end-of-course exams. The results of these tests are included in accountability calculations. Students in grades kindergarten through 2 will be given diagnostic tests in reading and math to determine readiness and to inform parents and teachers of students' skill levels.

Q: What about arts & humanities and practical living?

A: Instead of paper-and-pencil tests like those given in the past, schools will conduct annual Program Reviews in these areas. These reviews, which are done by school personnel, are designed to show whether schools are:

- improving the quality of teaching and learning for all students in all programs
- ensuring all students have equal access to the skills that will assist them in being productive citizens
- allowing students to demonstrate understanding beyond a paper-and-pencil test
- ensuring a school-wide integration of the program skills across all content areas

Q: When are state-level tests given?

A: Senate Bill 1 required that the reading, math, science, social studies and writing tests be given during the last 14 days of a school district's instructional calendar. End-of-course exams are given when students complete courses in English II, U.S. History, Biology and Algebra II. Juniors in the public school system also take the ACT, and that is administered in March. The EXPLORE test for 8th graders and PLAN test for 10th graders are given in the fall.